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Public Library Web Managers Workshop 2000 Cascading Style Sheets

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Why maintain a web-site?

- Web space is dynamic in nature
- Lack of maintenance leads to a stale site
- Cost of change can dwarf initial set-up
- A successful/effective site remains “alive”

Typical changes to a web-site

- a revised “look and feel”
- modified navigation bars
- redesign to take advantage of tables and frames
- addition of new sections of content
- a return to a non-frames design

Web-site maintenance activities

W3C activities

Navigational issues

Usability issues

Accessibility issues

Analysis and Evaluation

Validation/Conformance

Cross-browser issues

Link checking

Style Sheets

Scripting (CGI, VBScript, JavaScript ..)

Server Side Includes

Style Sheets

- What are they?
- What's so good about them?
- How do we make use of them?
- W3C CSS activity
- Cross-browser issues

What are style sheets?

- Initiative led by W3C
- Enable precise control over presentation
- Enable variation in rendition of web-pages
- A set of guidelines to tell a browser how to display/present a document
- Huge range of browsers in use, with differing amounts of support for CSS

A set of guidelines for presenting a document

- document background should be blue
- top-level heading should be in 20pt Bold Arial (or Helvetica, or a sans-serif font)
- text of the body should be 10pt Times Roman and black; links should be maroon; visited links should be yellow
- Block quotations should be set in 8pt Times italic. Text should be black and background pink
- Warnings should be indented on both sides and set in yellow

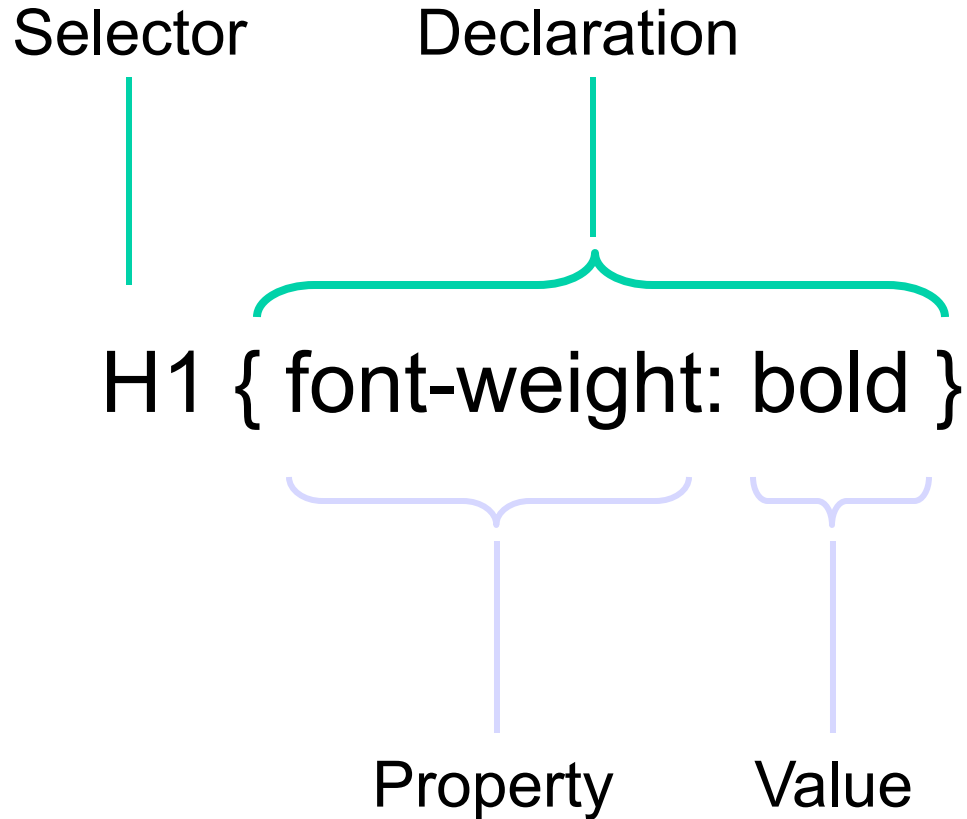
Why are style sheets useful?

- Separation of presentation from structure
- HTML designed for expressing structure
- Associate presentation with structure in a “clean” manner
- Ease of maintenance

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Style Sheet Rules



Styles and Properties

Styles fall into roughly four basic categories:

- font formatting (font family, size and style)
- block formatting (alignment, indentation)
- colours and backgrounds
- link styles

How do we use style sheets?

- Inline styles
- Embedded style blocks
- External linked style sheets
- (imported style sheets)

Inline Styles

```
<P STYLE="margin-right: 50pt; margin-left: 50pt; font-family: sans-serif; background: silver">This is a paragraph with styles applied. It is an indented paragraph with a grey background and a sans-serif font. If this were a normal HTML paragraph you could not do this without using some combination of other HTML tags such as tables, blockquotes or inline images.</P>
```

Embedded Style blocks

```
<head>
<style type="text/css">
<!--
P {   margin-right: 10pt;
      margin-left:  10pt;
      font-family:  sans-serif;
      background:  yellow;}
H1 {  font-family:  sans-serif;
      font-size:    28pt;}
-->
</style>
</head>
```

Embedded Style Blocks

- Style definitions are collected in one place
- Easy to locate and change
- Note use of comment tags

Linked Style Sheets

In styles.css file:

```
P {margin-right: 10pt  
   margin-left: 10pt;  
   font-family: sans-serif;  
   background: yellow;}  
H1 {font-family: sans-serif;  
     font-size: 28pt;}
```

In HTML file between <head> tags:

```
<link rel="stylesheet"  
      type="text/css"  
      href="styles.css">
```

Linked Style Sheets

- External or linked style sheets can be applied to a page or set of pages
- Provide an easy way to change or experiment with the “look-and-feel” of an entire site

Style Classes

Enable creation of classes of HTML element to which a style can be applied

e.g. A “Tip”

- grey background
- 30pt indent
- red text

```
<P CLASS=“Tip”>
```

Style Classes

```
<head>
<style type="text/css">
<!--
p.Tip { margin-right: 30pt;
        margin-left: 30pt;
        background: grey;
        color: red; }
</style>
-->
</head>
<p class="Tip"> This paragraph will take on
the style of a "Tip". </p>
```

Cascading Style Sheets

- Embedded, inline or linked styles can be combined
- Designed to “inherit” from the next larger form of style
- The “cascade” enables general style for a web-site, with fine tuning for pages or specific elements

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W3C Activity in CSS

- CSS level1 --recommendation Dec 1996
- CSS Level 2 --recommendation May 1998
- Conformance testing (CSS1 and CSS2)
- CSS1 Test suite
- W3C Core style sheets

See: <http://www.w3.org/Style>



Cross-Browser Issues

- Huge range of browsers in use, with differing amounts of support for CSS
- Consider use of style sheets an investment into future maintenance
- WebReview's Master/Safe/Danger list
- WebReview's CSS Leader Board
<http://webreview.com/pub/guides/style/lboard.html>

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Concluding remarks

- Web-site maintenance involves a huge variety of activities
- Designing for change can help reduce the burden
- Style sheets help to ease maintenance
- Many automated tools now in existence